

August 11, 2011

Mary Ann Barnes, 1204 Allison Drive, Rockville, MD 20851

Telephone call to staff to provide comments on draft Rockville Pike Plan:

1. She has concerns about the costs of implementing the plan, and
2. She is concerned about the impacts of traffic congestion on the Pike and fire and rescue response times. She suggests one lane of the Pike be dedicated for use only by 911 emergency vehicles.



John Tyner, Chair
 Rockville Planning Commission
 100 Maryland Avenue
 Rockville, MD 20850

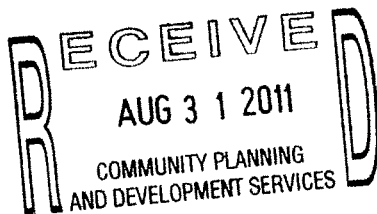
Dear Chairman Tyner and Members of the Planning Commission,

The Rockville Chamber of Commerce has carefully reviewed the proposed plan for Rockville's Pike, and this letter represents the views of its membership, which includes small, medium and large businesses.

The principal focus of the Rockville Chamber's review of the Rockville Pike Plan is "How does the Plan affect Business in the Corridor?" A strong business community is a critical component of the quality of life enjoyed in Rockville. The Pike Plan recognizes that Rockville Pike is a critical component of that vibrant business community. Our review raised a number of questions. We'd like to highlight a few of those questions and some potential answers that we believe should be addressed more fully in the Plan:

1. How do we preserve Rockville as a regional retail destination? How do we retain the national chains, anchor stores, specialty retailers, and local shops? We believe that some of the answers are:

- Continue to provide what retail needs for success: visibility, accessibility, signage, customer traffic, and parking – incorporate them into the Plan. Flowers and low shrubs along the Pike instead of trees to increase visibility. Provide for monument signs along the Pike roadway listing all tenants and way-finding signs to parking areas. A good example of such a sign is located at the corner of Halpine Road and Rockville Pike in front of the Shops at Congressional Village. Provide for some close and convenient parking for small businesses, including clear access off of the Pike to the parking facility to make it easier for customers to park nearby and do impulse shopping.
- State a clear transition plan that allows existing retail centers to remain and prosper while underutilized sites redevelop per the Plan. Reach out to stakeholders who own properties on the Pike to determine how to make the Plan work.
- Eliminate the burdens created by labeling existing retail centers "non-conformities" – they may have long term leases and will remain in place for the life of the Plan – we need them to be able to modernize, expand, and react to changes in the retail marketplace.





- Encourage active retail at whatever location within the Plan the free market places it – safe streets rely on activity at the street level provided by retail – don't artificially limit the types of uses based on the types of streets. In particular, it is imperative to create an 18-hour lifestyle experience to encourage people to move on or near the Pike within the Rockville Pike Plan sector. Limiting certain streets in terms of nightlife, bar and restaurant uses is imprudent and will hamper a lifestyle experience that would attract residential dwellers.

2. How do we take advantage of existing assets in the Corridor?

Twinbrook Metro Station

Higher density around the Metro stations makes sense and will provide incentives for redevelopment. Entertainment districts should also be encouraged to include theaters, music venues, coffee shops, bars and restaurants. Recognize that residents and workers walk to and from the Twinbrook Metro Station from the businesses and residences west of Rockville Pike to Jefferson Street. Take advantage of the proximity to the Metro and expand the transit oriented area and Urban Core to encompass a logical area to the west of Rockville Pike in line with the station. Under sustainable green building standards as well as urban walking studies, the proper radius around the Metro should be one-half mile.

Rockville Metro Station & Rockville Town Center

Capitalize on the adjacency of the Northern section of the Pike Plan to both the Rockville Metro station and Town Center and add a significant commercial and residential component to that section. The same level of density around the Metro station will also alleviate potential congestion in surrounding residential neighborhoods as more people walk to work, restaurants, shops and play.

New Street Grid

Encourage property owners through incentives to dedicate and build the proposed street grid. Don't downzone the Pike – Upzone where appropriate to make the Plan more realistic and strengthen the tax base.

3. How are we paying for the Plan? Does the Plan increase the commercial tax base of the City? Does the Plan generate enough revenue to pay for the infrastructure? More work needs to be done to demonstrate that the economics work to bring this Plan to fruition. Tax Increment Financing should be considered to provide incentives to small business.



4. How does this Plan coordinate with other policies and issues inside the City and market forces outside the City? How does this Plan coordinate with the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance in light of the current state of school capacity and traffic capacity along the Pike? The APFO Study Committee will provide input on these issues that are critical to maintaining the quality of life in Rockville. How does this Plan coordinate with alternatives for Bus Rapid Transit being advocated by the County between White Flint and Science City? Provision for BRT down the center of the Pike without local lanes would improve pedestrian safety and decrease traffic. How does this Plan coordinate with the pressures and opportunities presented by the White Flint Sector Plan?

More work needs to be done to answer these questions. Let's not rush to a decision and impact the great things we want to preserve about this Corridor. We strongly recommend more input, information and ideas be solicited from stakeholders and experts. The Chamber stands ready to assist in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Jolly".

Andrea Jolly, Executive Director
Rockville Chamber of Commerce

Montgomery County Executive's Transit Task Force
Offices of the County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

September 21, 2011

Mr. John Tyner, Chairman
City of Rockville Planning Commission
c/o Mr. David Levy
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Mr. Tyner:

The Montgomery County Transit Task Force (Task Force), appointed by County Executive Isiah Leggett on February 24, 2011, is a public – private partnership focused on making a comprehensive rapid transit system in Montgomery County a reality for its citizens and businesses. The mission of the Task Force is to advise the County Executive on how to achieve his vision, and be advocates for developing and implementing a world-class, county-wide, rapid transit system that is safe, efficient and effectively moves people throughout the county.

The Task Force recently received a Rockville Pike Corridor Neighborhood Plan (Plan) presentation from Susan Swift and Craig Simoneau, and wishes to submit comments with respect to the Plan, as part of the public record, to the Rockville Planning Commission (Commission). The Task Force also requests that the Commission approve an amendment to the Rockville Comprehensive Master Plan that incorporates other rapid transit routes.

In support of the rapid transit endeavor, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) initiated a Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Study through Parsons Brinkerhoff, to identify key corridors within the County that could facilitate premium rapid transit service. Rockville Pike South from the Rockville Metrorail Station to the Bethesda Metrorail Station was identified as the second highest daily boardings per route mile and Rockville Pike North was the fourth highest, based on the final report dated July 2011. Clearly Rockville Pike is a critical component of the County's rapid transit network.

The interaction between the Plan and the County's System Wide Rapid Transit vision is a key component of the success of both. Specifically, although the number and function of lanes and streetscape may vary, the Task Force recommends that the Rockville

Mr. John Tyner, Chairman
September 21, 2011
Page 2 of 3

Pike roadway be designed so that a rapid transit system can run without extensive or expensive machinations to accommodate it. The dedicated center transit lanes for rapid transit provides an alignment that creates a safer environment for pedestrians and is simpler to construct and operate.

The White Flint Partnership, a group of major property owners within the White Flint Sector Plan area to the South of the City of Rockville represented by the B. F. Saul Company, Federal Realty Investment Trust, Gables Residential, The JBG Companies, Lerner Enterprises, and Tower Companies is also advocating for a dedicated center lane rapid transit system along Rockville Pike.. They took great care in their Rockville Pike alignment study of the White Flint Sector Plan area to avoid the necessity for significant rights-of-way for both planning and practical considerations. In fact, Montgomery County has incorporated this section into their approved White Flint Sector Plan.

Montgomery County established a Special Tax District, levying an ad valorem tax of ten cents per \$100 of assessed value on the commercial property owners within the White Flint Sector Plan area. The sole purpose of this fund is to support specific transportation infrastructure improvements within the Development District. We offer this as an example of possible future funding for the City of Rockville's portion of Rockville Pike.

The Task Force supports the need for a continuous, dedicated, lane for rapid transit along Rockville Pike. It benefits the City by: (1) providing a safe haven for pedestrians as they cross multiple lanes of Rockville Pike, (2) providing rapid transit vehicles unobstructive movement, (3) providing left hand turn movements, (4) providing free movement on right hand turns, (4) minimizing the needs for transit users to cross the full width of Rockville Pike, and (5) strengthening the application for funding of the system with the Federal Government and other outside public and private resources. The Task Force believes the dedicated center transit lane concept is as central to the success of the City's Rockville Pike corridor as it is to the County's vision of a County-wide system. Therefore, the Task Force commends the Commission for its recent decision to narrow the options to two, both of which support rapid transit vehicles. The Task Force urges the Commission to recommend to the Mayor and Council a dedicated center line rapid transit cross-section for Rockville Pike, including accommodation for transit stations and pedestrian access. Further, the main road alignment section should be as consistent with the version in the White Flint sector plan as possible, with streetscape and access lanes specific to Rockville.

The Task Force also recommends changes to the text, most notably in Chapter 5, of the Rockville Pike Plan that addresses the benefits of, and need for, rapid transit within Rockville Pike and how the plan accommodates it.

Mr. John Tyner, Chairman
September 21, 2011
Page 3 of 3

Finally, in order to approve rapid transit in other non-Rockville Pike Neighborhood Plan areas of the City, the Task Force recommends the Commission approve a recommendation for an amendment to the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). Specifically, changes to the Transportation Elements of the CMP that approve rapid transit on all other proposed routes in the City. The Task Force believes a separate amendment to the CMP provides the most timely vehicle to address these changes. The Montgomery County Planning Board will be considering changes to the County's Master Plan for Highways to incorporate rapid transit. We recommend the Rockville Planning Commission adopt a timeline similar to the Montgomery County Planning Boards so that approval within both jurisdictions is coordinated.

Thank you for your positive consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. Mark Winston".

L. Mark Winston, Chair
Montgomery County Executive's
Transit Task Force

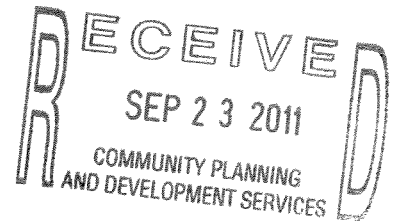
cc: Susan Swift, City of Rockville Director of Community Planning and Development Services
Francoise Carrier, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Isiah Leggett, Montgomery County Executive



111 Maryland Avenue | Rockville, Maryland 20850-2364 | 240-314-5000
www.rockvillemd.gov

September 19, 2011

City of Rockville Planning Commission
c/o Long Range Planning, CPDS
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville MD 20850



Re: Rockville Pike Plan

The Human Services Advisory Commission has a few concerns about the “Rockville Pike Envision a Great Place” Plan.

1. We are disappointed at the potential loss of the diversity that currently exists in many independent stores and restaurants on Rockville Pike. New development will both displace the current businesses and increase their rents, perhaps becoming cost-prohibitive to their return. As an example, we were saddened to hear that the Waygoose had to close its doors in Town Center due to increased rental costs. In Washington D.C., smaller shops were subsidized during the construction period for Gallery Place as a means of helping them stay in business. We ask that such a model be considered for the developers of Rockville Pike.

2. The proposed housing is primarily one-and-two-bedroom units which will result in fewer families. We believe larger three-and-four-bedroom units should also be developed. As Rockville grows in the future, all types of families should be accommodated. If larger apartments are not built, the Plan will actually prevent families from living in Rockville as this will be the available housing stock and they will not have other options. Also, as families grow, they will be forced to leave Rockville and seek housing elsewhere since there is a limited stock of suitable homes available in the Rockville area. More affordable three-and-four-bedroom units need to be included in any new developments to attract and meet the needs of families.

3. We urge the City to carefully consider the needs of residents with disabilities when planning the transportation system to insure that adjustments are made to meet or exceed

ADA requirements, thus accommodating their needs. The plan should ensure that entry and exit points for public transportation do not compromise the safety of those in wheelchairs. Special attention should be given to the design for medians including the consideration of nearby signage and sensory distractions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Cynthia Cotte Griffiths".

Cynthia Cotte Griffiths, Chair
Human Services Advisory Commission

Exhibit No. 125

Support for Envision a Great Place
Clayton Harrington
to:
rockvillepikeplan
09/23/2011 06:05 PM
Show Details

Dear City of Rockville Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my support for the new Rockville Pike redevelopment plan entitled "Rockville's Pike: Envision a Great Place". I firmly believe that it is time to redevelop Rockville Pike to reflect the slightly more urban nature of the city while making use of mass transit (bus lines) and actually increasing the amount of open green space. The current layout of Rockville Pike that was produced largely during the 1960s and 70s reflects an era of strip malls and parking lots that is now detrimental to our quality of life.

This plan show how we could make better use of the space on Rockville Pike, increase the amount of green space, encourage the use of mass transit and smart growth and, most likely, reduce traffic congestion.

Thank you for your time. I reiterate my strong support for this plan and hope that it is implemented.

Best regards,

Clayton Harrington

Rockville resident

**Plan critical for cities future****Akil Lester** to: rockvillepikeplan

09/26/2011 09:58 PM

If there is any further proof the city of Rockville needs to implement this mixed use plan quickly and to its full extent one only needs to look at recent census data reports that were released last week. Rockville and Montgomery County in general is losing its ability to attract the young professional creative generation. Arlington Count/DC with have urban lively neighborhoods that are attracting recent college grads in droves on one side of the county. On the other side the suburbs like Loudoun and Howard are attracting professional households with their newer larger housing stock. Rockville quickly needs to reinvent itself in order to compete with both growing areas if it intends to be a part of the areas future economic prosperity. A urban boulevard surrounded by neighborhoods with renovated housing stock would invite a broad spectrum highly educated individuals that are deciding where to locate in this region. - Akil

Akil Lester

Washington D.C (Former county resident)

Exhibit No. 127

Rockville Pike Plan - a citizen's reaction

Virginia Quesada

to:

rockvillepikeplan

09/29/2011 11:56 PM

Show Details

9/29/11

To:

City of Rockville-Planning Commission

c/o Long Rang Planning, CPDS

111 Maryland Avenue

Rockville, MD 20850

From:

Virginia Quesada

1217 Edmonston Drive

Rockville, Maryland 20851

To Whom it May Concern,

The Rockville Pike Plan is aimed to design the future of the Rockville Pike corridor that runs from Bou Avenue to the East and to Richard Montgomery Drive to the West.

What happens in this plan will profoundly affect the quality of the lives of the people in the surrounding neighborhoods.

What protects our community from over development and from an over burdened infrastructure is a good Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance or APFO.

An Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance - APFO- is designed to manage a community's growth. It ties the approval of new development to the availability and adequacy of public facilities and services.

A strong APFO ensures that public schools, roads, sewers, water for fire fighting, police and rescue response times and other infrastructure or services are adequate to support new development. In other words, a strong APFO prohibits development unless the public facilities and services are in place to support it.

To get the current proposed plan passed ---"Rockville Pike: Envision a Great Place " the Rockville Government would have to greatly weaken the APFO.

Currently our schools are already over capacity.

Many of us in the neighborhood agree that a strong APFO is in the best interest of our community, our city, our county, our state or even our great nation.

We need adequate facilities for our schools, our roads, our water, our police and fire services - just to mention a few. And what would we gain by this plan? **OVERCROWDED SCHOOLS, CLOGGED TRAFFIC, LOSS OF FREE AND OPEN PARKING, ALL THE SMALL BUSINESSES THAT WE LIKE HERE AND WE WOULD HAVE TO PAY FOR THIS!!!**

VERY LITTLE of the money would go to Rockville. MOST WILL GO TO THE STATE, THE COUNTY AND THE DEVELOPERS. WE would JUST GET TO PAY THE BILL and watch our community suffer from OVER DEVELOPMENT AND INADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES.

What makes Rockville such a nice place to live is: our multi-cultural community; the small, diverse and affordable

Exhibit No. 127

businesses; the parks; the schools; the small town urban feel; the fabulous shopping with free and open parking lots; and our overall family friendly atmosphere.

Please do not weaken our APFO.

Thank you,

Virginia Quesada
1217 Edmonston Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20851

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Exhibit No. 128

Resident Comment on Rockville Pike Plan
C Littlefield
to:
rockvillepikeplan@rockvillemd.gov
09/30/2011 04:11 PM
Please respond to C Littlefield
[Show Details](#)

History: This message has been replied to.

Pls find attached my independent comments on the Rockville Pike Plan.
Thanks and Best Regards,
Charles Littlefield

COMMENTS TO ROCKVILLE PIKE PLAN

Charles Littlefield, resident of East Rockville (316 South Horners Lane)

September 30, 2011

Dear Rockville Planning Commission:

These are my personal, individual comments as a Rockville resident to the Rockville Pike Plan. Though I've pointed out a few things I don't agree with, overall I very much appreciate that the city has gone to such great lengths to study this area and look for ways to make it better. I also appreciate that the City is allowing residents to provide such a significant amount of input into generating the plan and reviewing it before making a final decision. I hope that the final product balances everyone's interests as much as possible, and is done in phases so that strategies can be modified, if needed.

1. I think building height should be limited to 5 or 6 stories, except in the Town Center of Rockville. In Rockville, the Pike does not currently have very many tall buildings and this should be maintained. Tall and highly visible buildings (10-, 15-stories or higher) are more consistent with the type of development taking place in White Flint. It is my impression that many of Rockville's residents do not want to emulate White Flint; they are content with Rockville and have purposely, not randomly, chosen Rockville over White Flint as a place to live and/or raise their families. That aside, it also seems logical that communities should strive to be different from each other to offer the widest possible range of living styles, rather than emulate each other around a certain norm dictated by profit motives and current "development trends." I would be very sad if Rockville—a unique city with history and deep-rooted communities and neighborhoods—were to emulate White Flint. I know that some people really like White Flint, but on the same token, a lot of people really like Rockville. *My Recommendation: Modify the plan so that the change between White Flint and Rockville is stark and immediately noticeable (i.e. create a Gateway Effect). When people leave White Flint and enter Rockville they should note lower buildings, more trees, different architecture, less traffic, etc. The effect should be like night and day to give Rockville a unique character, rather than trying to design a neighborhood virtually identical to the development taking place in White Flint.*
2. I am skeptical of the "Multi-Way Boulevard" concept. The artists' renditions in the Pike plan are difficult to envision in the context of Rockville. This Boulevard concept is too big in scope, too radical and out of proportion. Also, the examples provided are not compelling, mainly because they are examples equated with large, sprawling metropolitan cities, and not with a medium-sized suburb such as Rockville. For example, with respect to the Paseo de Gracia (Barcelona) part of its charm comes from being a European design with antiquity—the buildings that front the Paseo were filled in over the course of two centuries by hundreds of small landowners, and with extraordinary attention to architectural detail, handcrafted facades and ornate balconies (note: none of Rockville's new apartment buildings have usable balconies...so I don't

think they will achieve the “Paseo” effect). The Paseo de Gracia wasn’t built cookie-cutter style by “mega-developers” aiming to maximize profit and cut cost. As such, I don’t think the final reality conceived by the Plan will match the vision contemplated in the Paseo de Gracia. I also think that K Street in Washington is a lackluster example to follow. I have been working one block off K Street for the last 8 years. The only notable difference between K Street and any other street in DC is that K Street is annoying because it takes longer to cross the street. The best, and most walkable streets in DC aren’t panoramic avenues, they are the small avenues and neighborhood streets found in Georgetown and Adams Morgan. That is where people go to enjoy the “urban environment.” Another example is the Avenida 9 de Julio in Buenos Aires, which if anything acts as a separator of the urban environment; the Argentines and tourists stay away from the avenue and spend more time in the narrow, labyrinthine streets, and pedestrian malls (ex: Calle Florida) nearby that are full of culture and shopping. *My Recommendation: Explore various alternatives to the Multi-Way Boulevard; allow the City to opt among various solutions rather than have a single solution imposed upon it (especially one that is unfitting).*

3. I don’t think it is good to make bikes share a lane with buses, nor should they pass near cars nor sidewalks. This is not bike friendly, this seems dangerous to me and will result in deaths. (At a minimum it will *discourage* the use of bikes as alternative mode of transport). I believe that a separate, continuous, high-quality bike path should be built, both for recreation and alternative transport means. This bike path should be completely isolated from automobile traffic and pedestrians with barriers (trees, fences, etc) or sufficient distance (>20 ft) from the road so that accidents are virtually impossible. I think the bike path could be built either 1) along the railroad tracks and behind the stores (i.e. east of the Pike), with chain link fence, tunnels, bridges, etc as needed, or 2) on the west side of the Pike utilizing land along the Woodmont Country Club and/or the meridians of shopping centers along the way. This bike trail can then be used to access all destinations along the bike path, albeit separate from the street/sidewalk.
4. I am wary of so much emphasis on ‘mixed-use’ development. It’s a current development trend based on the old development style of the 1800’s, i.e. when houses/apartments were built on city blocks on top of street-level stores. This kind of development has a certain charm and logic to it—both economic and environmental—but much has changed and much will continue to change. I believe that retail has started a long-term decline that will continue for decades as online businesses replace the need for the vast majority of retail outlets. The recent bankruptcies/failures of companies such as Circuit City, Linens & Things, Borders Books, etc. is not only because of our current economic downturn, it is the result of a permanent change in consumer buying patterns and stiff competition. There can only be so many Harris Teeters, Starbucks, McDonalds, etc. in a given area. At some point, the market for these stores will be saturated and you will be left with lots of empty space creating a ghost-town effect. *My Recommendation: Think outside of the box. I believe the decline in physical retail will produce a new type of store/warehouse/local products experience that hasn’t really been articulated yet. The Pike is one of the last places where ethnic, and mom-and-pop stores persist.*

This should be protected, not eliminated. I do think, however, that a limited mixed-use option is still a good choice in the zones within walking distance of the metro stations, if limited mostly to the adjacent streets so as not to oversaturate neighborhoods with retail.

5. In terms of phasing, Rockville Town Center should absolutely be number one priority. It should be fully complete (including all the remaining development projects) and economically healthy before any expansion of retail or residential is allowed in the Rockville Pike Planning area. If the City doesn't follow this course of action, there is a risk that the Town Center could once again become a ghost town because all of the people will want to go the new areas "on the Pike." Developing the Pike and Twinbrook when the businesses in Town Center are still struggling economically is only going to create competition, further hurting these businesses' economic prospects and endangering the massive investment that the City has already made in the Rockville Town Center. Once again, please be mindful of oversaturation of retail!!!
6. I think the magnitude for population increase should be reduced and residential should be limited to the areas around the metro stations. I don't believe that traffic can be adequately mitigated and I am concerned about where new schools will be built—I am especially concerned that schools will be either built in urban environments or existing park land will be "sacrificed" for new schools. There's only one way to avoid that—reduce the amount of housing allowed by this Plan. We should strive for quality, not quantity!

Thank You Very Much,
Charles Littlefield

Exhibit NO. 129

Rockville Pike Plan: Woodmont Country Club's comments on the Rockville Pike District Form Code
Mazo, Samantha L. - SLM

to:

'planning.commission@rockvillemd.gov', 'rockvillepikeplan@rockvillemd.gov',
DLevy@rockvillemd.gov, MBayonet@rockvillemd.gov, CKebba@rockvillemd.gov

09/30/2011 04:14 PM

Cc:

"Sears, Barbara A. - BAS", "Isaacson, Andrew L. - ALI", "Bob Youngentob (Bob@eya.com)", "Larry
Gandal (E-mail) (lgandal@srgpe.com)", "bpizzimenti@woodmontcc.com"

Show Details

Dear Commissioner Tyner and Commissions of the City of Rockville Planning Commission:

Enclosed please find comments on the Form Code submitted on behalf of Woodmont Country Club by Matthew J. Bell, AIA, a well-regarded architect and land planning consultant as well as a professor of architecture and urban design at the University of Maryland. Hard copies of these comments are being delivered to the City of Rockville.

Woodmont thanks you for the consideration of these comments, and we look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Best-

Samantha Mazo

Samantha L. Mazo

Linowes and Blocher LLP

7200 Wisconsin Avenue

Bethesda, MD 20814

Ph: 301.961.5261

Fax: 301.654.2801

smazo@linowes-law.com

www.linowes-law.com

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September 30, 2011

Barbara A. Sears
301.961.5157
bsears@linowes-law.com

Samantha L. Mazo
301.961.5261
smazo@linowes-law.com

Via Hand Delivery and Electronic Mail

Mr. John Tyner, Chairman
and Commissioners of the
City of Rockville Planning Commission
Rockville City Hall
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Woodmont Country Club's comments on the Rockville Pike District Form Code
("Form Code")

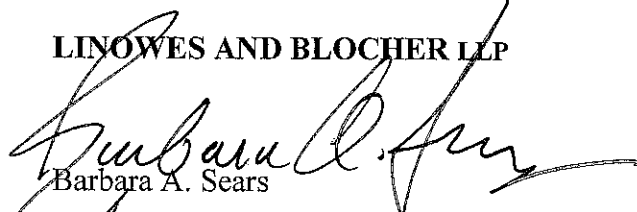
Dear Chairman Tyner and Commissioners:


Enclosed please find comments on the Form Code submitted on behalf of Woodmont Country Club by Matthew J. Bell, AIA of EE&K, a Perkins Eastman company. Mr. Bell is a well-regarded architect and land planning consultant and a professor of architecture and urban design at the University of Maryland's School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

Thank you for your consideration of Mr. Bell's comments. We look forward to working with the Planning Commission and Staff to make the Form Code clear and effective.

Very truly yours,

LINOWES AND BLOCHER LLP


Barbara A. Sears


Samantha L. Mazo

Mr. John Tyner, Chairman
and Commissioners of the
City of Rockville Planning Commission
September 30, 2011
Page 2

Enclosure

cc: Mr. David Levy
Ms. Mayra Bayonet
Ms. Cindy Kebba
Mr. Andrew Isaacson, Esq.
Mr. Larry Gandal, Esq.
Mr. Robert Youngentob
Mr. Brian Pizzimenti



EE&K a Perkins Eastman company

Mr. John Tyner, Chair
And Members of the Rockville Planning Commission
Rockville City Hall
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Form Based Code – Woodmont Country Club

Dear Mr. Tyner and Members of the Planning Commission:

This letter is submitted on behalf of Woodmont Country Club to address the issue of recommended lot dimensions in the proposed Form Based Code and Regulating Plan of the draft Rockville's Pike: Envision a Great Place Master Plan. In the spirit of this Code, we offer our suggestions as a way to refine the Code to be a better and more natural fit along the length of Rockville Pike near the Woodmont Country Club. We have applied our understanding of development patterns both close to and distant from mass transit, in an effort to encourage desirable forms of development in this area, which is approximately equidistant between two metro stations. As a result, we suggest modest increases in the Code's allowable lot dimensions. We have supplied some graphics and text in support of these suggestions.

Introduction

The proposed Form Based Code and Regulating Plan for the Rockville Pike Corridor has the potential to transform this Corridor from strip-style retail uses along a road primarily focused on the efficient movement of traffic without regard to pedestrians, to an intermodal avenue with quality mixed-use development defining its edges and a more interconnected grid system of pedestrian-centered streets easing traffic congestion and creating communities of great value and diversity.

The proposed Form Based Code specifies block sizes, build-to lines and other code elements designed to simplify what is permitted to be built along Rockville Pike and result in a defined public realm of distinct character. In so doing, the Code and Regulating Plan specify certain limitations that apply directly to the Woodmont Country Club frontage and surrounding properties and will be more fully discussed below.

NORTH AMERICA
BOSTON, MA
CHARLOTTE, NC
CHICAGO, IL
NEW YORK, NY
OAKLAND, CA
PITTSBURGH, PA
STAMFORD, CT
TORONTO, ON
WASHINGTON, DC
SOUTH AMERICA
GUAYAQUIL, ECU
ASIA
MUMBAI, IND
SHANGHAI, PRC
MIDDLE EAST
DUBAI, UAE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20037
T. 202.861.1325
F. 202.861.1326

WWW.EEKARCHITECTS.COM



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Block size

The new vision for Rockville Pike is clear about the need to make smaller blocks and lots in support of the pedestrian environment and the general walkability of the streets. It is generally well understood that places with smaller block sizes and buildings that define street-walls and support active uses on the front facades provide a more pleasant environment for the pedestrian and help to define the space of the street as a contained space. Consequently, small blocks mean more streets and more intersections and give drivers the choice of alternative routes and the potential for more diversity in the urban fabric.

The dimension and orientation of the block is also important to consider. Some cities, such as Portland, Oregon have very small block sizes, 200' by 200' and each block of the downtown is the same orientation and dimension. Others, such as New York, maintain a 200' dimension in one direction with block lengths varying from 400' to 800' feet. Such a variation in direction produces a different effect with the "grain" of the city fabric different in one direction than another, with longer frontages (the cross streets) populated by townhouses and the larger apartment buildings along the avenues where the lots are deeper and the frontages broader. Barcelona, cited in the master plan, is characterized by "squarish" blocks of approximately 380' by 425' (Figure 1) with such successful streets as the Paseo de Garcia having frontage lengths of about 380' on the retail street. Certainly, the vibrancy of city neighborhoods is also dependent on blocks possessing a variety of development, or at least the appearance of such, whether or not it is developed by multiple parties (such as Georgetown, Alexandria or Barcelona) or all by one entity, such as the recent success at Rockville Town Square.

Looking at walkable neighborhoods closer to home, one sees block sizes of 250' by 350' across Alexandria, Virginia (Figure 2) and a variety of sizes from 300' by 600' (320' frontage on the retail fronts of Wisconsin Avenue) in Georgetown (Figure 3). In Washington, DC block sizes vary according to their location in the city grid. On Capitol Hill retail frontages along Pennsylvania Avenue SE can be up to 600' long (Figure 4) and some of the residential blocks are about 470' in width.

Building type and block size

Building typology also goes along with the block size. Generally, smaller blocks are suitable for less dense building types. Town house blocks can be as narrow in width as 130' (front property line to front property line) if the parking is integral with the building and no rear yard exists. If a rear yard of about 20' deep is included, the



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townhouse can be accommodated in about 170' to 200' feet, depending on the depth of the townhouse.

Multi-family buildings usually require block widths wider than 200'/250' in suburban contexts where the land value is not high enough to support underground parking. In these cases, either surface parking or above-ground structured parking is accommodated in the center of the block. Generally, these garages are 120' to 180' in width so that one of the bays can be sloped, minimizing the need for a separate ramp. Adding 75' to 100' of development to each side in order to screen the parking structure can result in width range from 300' to 330'.

Adding retail to the mix is also an important consideration. One interesting historic example of block size is Leesburg, Va with four original blocks of the downtown at 400' square. A new municipal parking structure of 155' by 245' is located in the center of the block (Figure 6). A more recent example of a mixed-use block is the main block of Bethesda Row which contains a much-used parking deck (Figure 7). That block is approximately 360' in width with an average length of 635' and contains a municipal parking deck measuring 260' by 180'. Active uses surround the perimeter of the block and the overall development is widely admired as one that has made Bethesda more interesting and more walkable.



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The Woodmont Country Club Frontage

That portion of the Woodmont Country Club that fronts Rockville Pike is about 500' in length and is included in the Middle Pike Urban Corridor Street Frontage. Requirements for the site in the Form Based Code (Chapter 6, page 27) are the following:

<u>Scenario 1</u>		<u>Scenario 2</u>
Based on TABLE 1.2.2.A		Based on TABLE 1.6*
Built-to-line	40'	40'
Side setback	0'	0'
Rear setback	25'	25'
Maximum lot width	150'	200'
Maximum lot depth	200'	250'

*Table 1.6 lists different width (200') and depth (250') allowances for all types but live work units.

It is reasonable to conclude that the development economics of the subject property are such that parking is not feasible in an underground structure and would likely occur above grade either as a surface or structured lot. For, while the site is within a reasonable walking distance of a Metro station, it is not in a location that would be considered a premium transit-oriented site, where the economics would support underground parking. We also assumed that a development that meets the goals of the master plan would be preferable to lower density development such as townhouses.

Scenario 1

This scenario, as shown in Table 1.2.2.A, results in a buildable depth of 135' and a buildable area of 20,250 sf. Although this dimension may be potentially suitable for townhouses fronting onto Rockville Pike with surface parking in the rear, it could not accommodate a feasible multi-family building. In our opinion, a viable multi-family building or a multi-family building with retail at the ground level would only be possible with underground parking as the lot depth would preclude surface parking, even at the lower ratios in the Code. Consequently, we believe this scenario, when applied to the subject property, would not be economically feasible or the recommended scenario to implement the intent of the Rockville Pike plan for mixed-use development along an attractive boulevard.



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Scenario 2

The larger lot width and depth shown in Table 1.6 would make possible a development more in line with the goals of the master plan. These dimensions, 250' depth of the lot, with setbacks and build-to lines, make a buildable depth from the Pike of 185' possible with an overall size of 37,000 gsf. Assuming a two bay parking deck of 120' width in the center of the block, a buildable dimension of 65' (for a multi-family project) from the edge of the deck to the front build-to line would be theoretically possible. However, buildings of this type generally require a greater depth than 65' and tend to work at dimensions around 100' to 125'. Although this scenario is theoretically buildable, it seems questionable from a economic feasibility standpoint. An increased block depth of 300' to 330' (Figure 5) would, in our judgment, make this scenario more feasible as a construction type and increase the likelihood of the site developing more in accordance with the exciting mixed-use vision for the Rockville Pike.

The 200' width of the lot should also be reconsidered and larger widths permitted. Multi-family projects typically have double-loaded corridor wings that range from 65' to 77' in width. Two wings approximately 65' wide would result in a court of 35' between them and a set off from the property line of $35'/2 = 17.5'$ for each wing. At a larger width of 75', the court becomes 25' and may limit the flexibility of multi-family development. A guideline for multifamily courts of this type is that a height to width ratio of 2:1 should be followed. A width of 25' limits the height of the building to a density perhaps less than desired by all parties. This larger dimension is becoming more frequent in the design of multi-family projects. Accordingly, a permitted lot width of up to a maximum of 500' feet depending on the design would be recommended.

CONCLUSION

- 1 We suggest that the lot size limitation for the property of Woodmont Country Club fronting on to the Rockville Pike be revised to allow up to 320' in depth to permit a more feasible multi-family/mixed-use development as envisioned in the master plan for the Pike.
- 2 We also suggest that the 200' maximum lot width be revised to 500' to allow more than one lot to be combined for design review and permit the Woodmont County Club to develop their entire frontage along the



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Rockville Pike as a single lot up to 500' in width, thereby better implementing the vision of the master plan.

The above modifications could be accomplished within the intent of the Form Based Code, i.e., a diverse street wall, diverse architecture, definition of the public realm, with proper set-backs and build-to lines incorporated and used as the basis of the design. (It should be noted that the recent mixed-use development at Bethesda Row (Figure 8) facing at the east side of Arlington Road is about 365' in width along that frontage and employs diverse architecture and supporting a vibrant street front.)

We believe that these suggested adjustments are reasonable and will help to achieve the masterplan vision. We support this vision and see, with these modifications, the possibility of an exciting mixed-use project, thereby adding one piece of the puzzle for a future, and much improved Rockville Pike.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any further questions or need clarification.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Bell, AIA
Principal

cc.

Andrew Isaacson, Esq.

Robert Youngentob

Barbara Sears, Esq.





DRAWING TITLE

Alexandria, VA

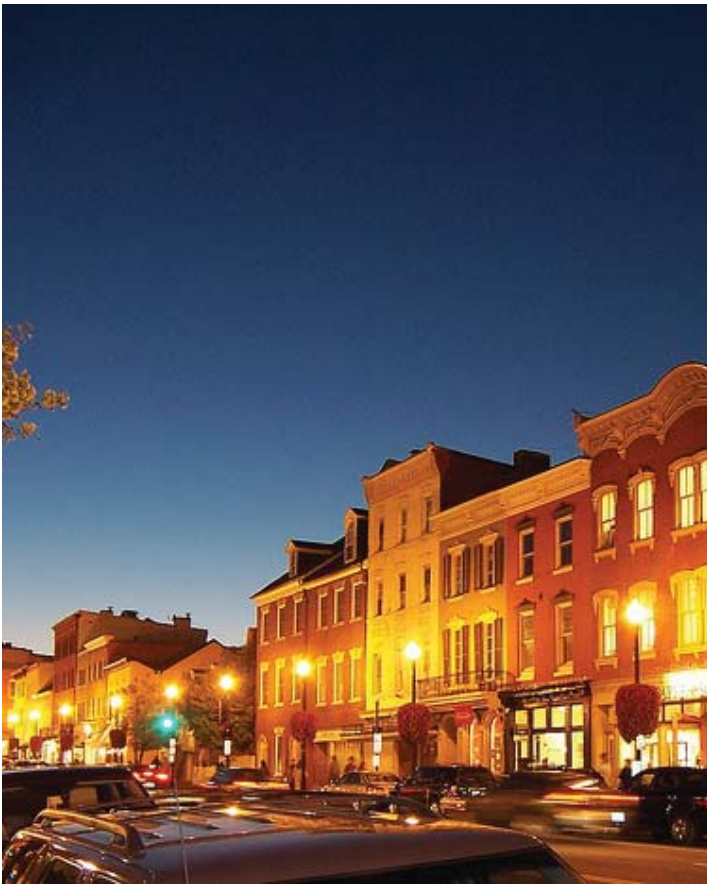
Figure 2

SCALE

DATE

Sep 29, 2011





DRAWING TITLE

Georgetown, DC

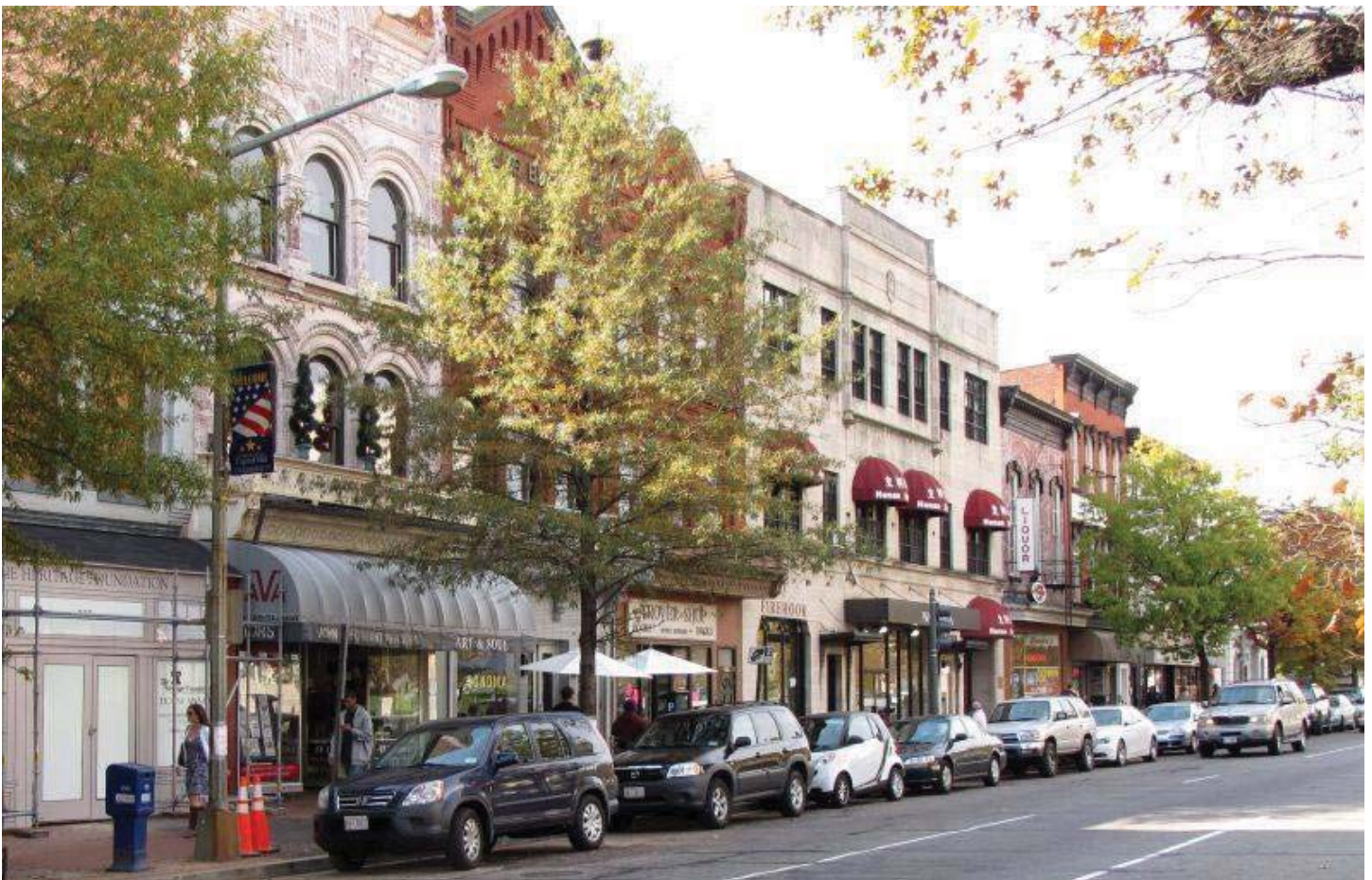
Figure 3

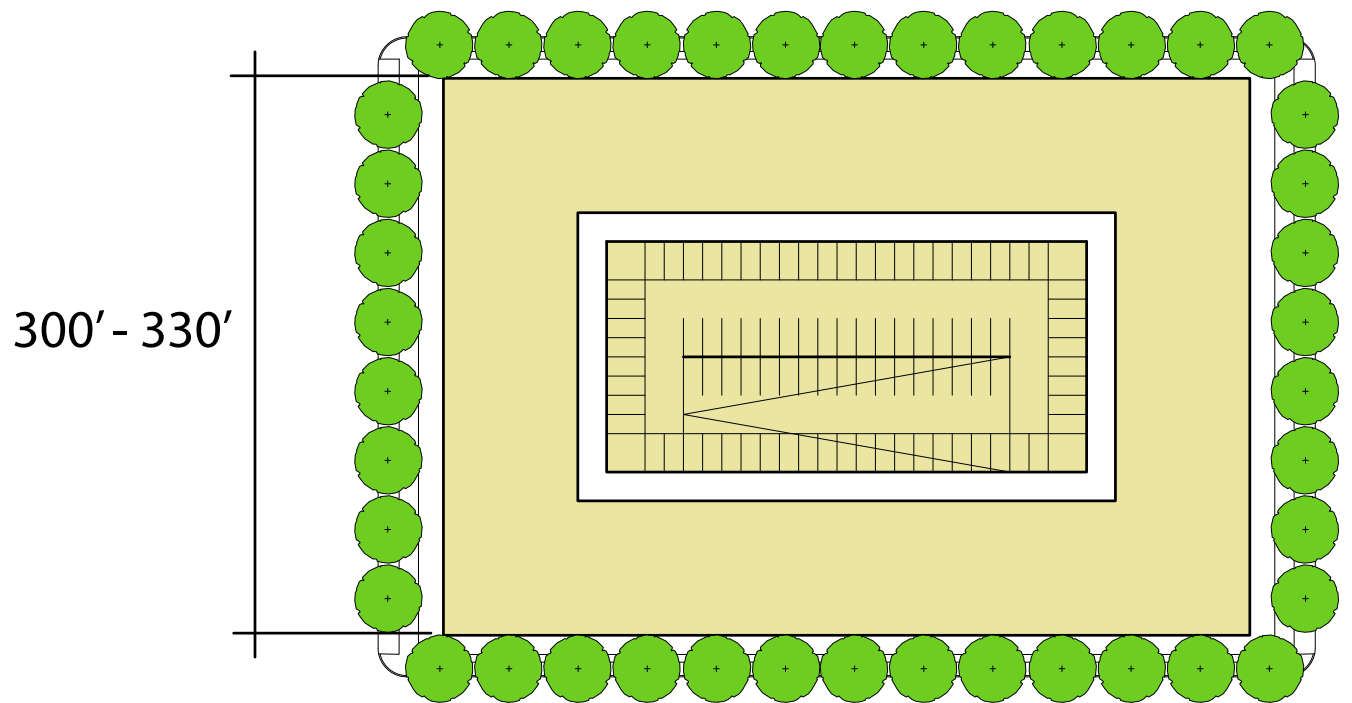
SCALE

DATE

Sep 29, 2011









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Leesburg, VA

Figure 6

SCALE

DATE

Sep 29, 2011





DRAWING TITLE

Bethesda, MD

Figure 7

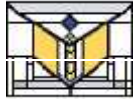
SCALE

DATE

Sep 29, 2011







To:
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: Fw: Ltr. to City of Rockville Planning Commission 9.30.11

----- Forwarded by David Levy/RKV on 09/30/2011 05:21 PM -----

From: "Kominers, William" <wkominers@lercheearly.com>
To: <dlevy@rockvillemd.gov>
Date: 09/30/2011 04:20 PM
Subject: Ltr. to City of Rockville Planning Commission 9.30.11
Sent by: "Navarro, Lucero Y." <lynavarro@lercheearly.com>

Re: Rockville Pike Plan

Attached please find a letter regarding the above-referenced matter.

Thank you,

Lucero Y. Navarro

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ATTORNEYS

September 30, 2011

Via Electronic and First Class Mail

City of Rockville Planning Commission
c/o Community Planning Department
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Rockville Pike Plan

Dear Chairman Tyner and Members of the Planning Commission:

We represent Shellhorne Rockville, LLC, ("Shellhorne") the owner of the Chesapeake Plaza, located at 1488 Rockville Pike. Kap Kapastin of Shellhorne testified at the public hearing on the draft Rockville Pike Plan in June. Since that time, we have continued to follow the work of the Commission on the Plan and have reviewed the public testimony submitted by others. This letter conveys some additional concerns on behalf of Shellhorne.

The most pressing concern, and the issue with the greatest potential impact, is the location of Chapman Avenue. The proposed location for Chapman is difficult to establish exactly based on the draft Plan. The Plan appears to recommend that Chapman Avenue extended be aligned approximately 60 feet to the west of the railroad right-of-way. This location would have a very negative impact on the future redevelopment of the Chesapeake Plaza site (and probably on the other sites along the tracks), because it would result in approximately 1/4 of the site being lost to this roadway and the undevelopable remainder. With required set-backs, this could grow to 1/3 of the site. Instead, we recommend that the road right-of-way be located directly adjacent to the railroad right-of-way, to allow more of the site to be redeveloped. In addition, as was stated in Shellhorne's public testimony, owners must be given the density from any land which is lost due to dedications for roadways (unlike traditional FAR-based zones like the MXCD and MXTD, the Form Code proposed in the Plan only provides density for land that is actually developed). If consideration is not given to these factors, there will be no incentive for these sites to redevelop.

We have reviewed, for example, the letter submitted to the Commission on behalf of Rockville Associates, Inc. That letter suggests that the Chapman Avenue right-of-way be placed 120 feet from the WMATA right-of-way to allow a developable floor plate on their site. Shellhorne has not yet had a chance to evaluate in detail the

ATTORNEYS

City of Rockville Planning Commission
September 30, 2011
Page 2

impact that this location would have on the Chesapeake Plaza site, but that impact should be fully evaluated by the staff and the Commission with respect to all sites along the railroad right-of-way. If a decision is made that the road should be 120 feet from the WMATA right-of-way within the Rockville Associates property, then the road should be placed this same distance from the right-of-way along the Chesapeake Plaza site and others. In short, the placement of the road should be reviewed in a comprehensive manner that takes into account its impact on all owners along the WMATA right-of-way, and the road alignment should be established so as to assure parcels are viable for development between the new road and the railroad.

The decision on the road location should not disadvantage or negatively impact some owners to the benefit of others. The characteristics of all of the sites along the right of way should be evaluated to ensure that all owners will have the ability to utilize their properties in a realistic and economically viable manner. We look forward to working with you on this effort.

Thank you for consideration of these concerns.

Very truly yours,

LERCH EARLY & BREWER, CHTD.

William Kominers

William Kominers

(CMB)

Cynthia M. Bar

Cynthia M. Bar

WK/CMB/lyn

cc: Mr. David Levy
Mr. Fred Wine
Kap Kapastin, Esquire